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On the divine government.

THE government which God exercises over this world may be considered as administered in three great departments,—his moral law—the gospel of his grace—and his universal providence. It is true that the term universal providence, taken in its most comprehensive signification, is expressive of his whole government; but his law and gospel are such important parts of his government, that they demand a particular and separate consideration. They are often distinctly considered in this way in the holy scriptures, and they will be so viewed in this paper.

Let us first consider his moral government, administered according to his holy law.—When God had created rational, moral agents in this world, it became necessary for their happiness, that they should have some standard of rectitude, and instructions by which they might govern themselves, so as to live in union, and promote the general happiness. It was also necessary that this should be given in a law of infinite obligation, and supported by proper

penalties, or the directions would be without effect, and especially after the apostacy, would be held in contempt. Without a law with proper penalties men would be left entirely to their own inclinations, and in a state of perfect anarchy and confusion. All would pursue the gratification of their own propensities and passions, without attention to obligation, or regard to the general good. There was no creature who had authority to give law to the world, none able to carry one into execution, and none who could provide any measures to unite and harmonize the interests and affections of mankind, so as to secure their happiness. God's benevolence, his rights as creator, and the perfections of his nature forbade him to leave them in a condition so deplorable. He therefore ordained a government over his creatures in which he consulted their good as well as his own glory. As it is written, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with

all thy heart, and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes which I command thee this day for thy good?"

The laws which God has given are founded on the simple principle of impartial goodness. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart,—and thy neighbor as thyself." It is the plain design of this law to direct us to such an holy love, as would cement us together in union and harmony, as one heart and one soul, united under one great head, the creator and benefactor of the whole.—It is often said that God governs the world for his own glory. No doubt he does. He knows his superior excellency, and he demands a supreme respect. And the government which he exercises reflects the highest glory on himself, and manifests his goodness and excellency to his creatures. He is glorious in ruling for the happiness of his subjects. The displays of his goodness are the principal source of their happiness, and he thus enriches them with the knowledge of his perfections. But we are not to conceive that it is the pride of dominion that regulates his government. Far otherwise: he delights to gratify his benevolence by enriching his creatures with the benefit of the best laws, and of knowing and confiding in his own goodness and perfection.

The love which this law requires, as our principle of action, is expected to fill the whole heart, and flow forth in every direction. It is to govern all our conduct, in every relation towards God and man. God, because he is infinitely great and good, is to be respected with all our hearts, and our fellow creatures, who stand

on a level with ourselves, are to be loved as ourselves. Where this love has full possession of the heart, there is no place left for any selfish or partial affections. It is a spirit of pure good will.

It is necessary further to remark, that this divine law is sanctioned with penalties, equal to the evil of disobedience. Such as resist the authority of God, and reject his law, are to be cut off from his favor, and excluded from all the blessings which arise from the society and fellowship of those who adopt the harmonizing spirit, which the law requires.—This disobedience, and the pernicious spirit of selfishness, which is the opposite of holy love, tends to infinite mischief. The disobedient are therefore sentenced to everlasting punishment. This sentence, duly executed, supports the law, and so benefits the obedient; manifests God's regard to his people, and glorifies his justice.—Such is the moral government of God. 'The law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good.'

Let us now attend to God's kingdom of grace, revealed in the gospel, which may be called the second great department of divine government.—The apostacy from God, and our disobedience to his law, gave occasion for this dispensation.—God beheld the world dead in trespasses and sins. The law of God, his justice, and our guilt, demanded the execution of the penalty. God saw our case, that there was none to save, none who could render an atonement, no creature who could render it just that he should be the justifier of sinners. And yet he saw, that this might be done; and his benevolence disposed him to resolve it should be accomplished. Christ under-

took to render the atonement, and be a mediator. The Holy Spirit undertook to renew and sanctify the elect, and the Father gave unto the Son so many as were necessary, that he might see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.—Here is a foundation laid for God to exercise his mercy in the view of all his creatures, and for sinners to become reconciled to God, and be reinstated in his favor. The terms, on which this salvation is offered, are a penitent, dutiful submission to God, and faith in Christ.—The period for acceptance is limited to this life, and the whole is published to man as matter of pure grace, and in the issue, judgment will pass according to our acceptance or rejection of the Redeemer.

In this dispensation, the law is magnified and made honorable by the obedience and sufferings of Christ, and is, if possible, better established, than if it had never been disobeyed, or than if its curse had been directly inflicted on every transgressor. God has also more fully manifested to his creatures his wisdom, goodness, justice, and mercy, than could otherwise have been done in our world. All his dutiful subjects will have the everlasting benefit of these rich discoveries of his glory.—In providing this salvation, an astonishing sacrifice was made, which will forever remain the wonder of heaven;—God manifested in the flesh—living—suffering—despised—dying, interceding for sinners, and receiving them into favor!!!

It should be noticed that the gospel, as well as the law, has its threatenings and penalties. The unbeliever will not only be excluded from the benefit of grace, but his punishment will be unspeakably

enhanced by his rejection of the Son of God. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Such contempt of the mercy of God, and of his glorious Son, is insufferable, and cannot be passed over without making the guilty the most awful examples of distinguished wrath.

It is a melancholy consideration, that this dispensation of grace is rejected by our world.—All with one consent would be excused from complying with its invitations. God therefore sends his Spirit, and renews whom he pleases, and thus brings them to repentance and faith in Christ. He fulfils his engagements to Christ, and has mercy on whom he will have mercy.—This is the kingdom of grace; in this God reigns. He has taken it upon him to show mercy, and work wonders of love, and so raise to himself a glorious kingdom from the ruins of an apostate world. By doing this, he greatly increases the everlasting happiness of his dutiful subjects in heaven, as well as on earth. They will forever rejoice the more exceedingly in him, on account of the dispensations of his grace.

The third great department of divine government remains to be considered. This is a universal providence—a direction of all worlds, things and events, so that they may all answer their end, in displaying God, and promoting the greatest blessedness of the universe.

Creatures need such a providence. The natural world needs to be managed for the production of food, raiment, health and comfort, which depend on innumerable things. The moral world

needs as much attention, in all its relations. The wrath of man must praise God, and the remainder of it be restrained. There was no creature who had wisdom for this,—none who had power, all were equally feeble and needy. But in God there is no want of power, or wisdom, or goodness; he is infinitely furnished for the sole management of the whole. He will cause all things to work together for the good of them that love him, and suffer nothing to take place, but in subservience to the greatest happiness of all who unite in the cause of holiness.—This government of God extends to the most minute events; nothing takes place in vain; the hairs of our heads are all numbered; he clothes the grass, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice and design.—Here is an infinite field of divine agency. He doeth his will in heaven above, and in earth beneath. He hears the cries of young ravens, and his care is no less necessary to the preservation and blessedness of men and angels. This agency will produce an incalculable sum of blessedness. This is the providence of God.

We have now noticed the law, gospel and providence of God. In all these administrations the Lord reigns, from pure benevolence, put in exercise by the actual necessities of his creatures. It also appears, that the benefits which arise to his creatures from his government, are immense and will be continually increasing forever, and that he reigns only to promote and advance the public good.

It follows therefore, that his creatures have no reasons ever to distrust and be jealous of him: There is no foundation for any of

those apprehensions and contentions, which so often arise between the rulers of this world and their subjects. How can any creature complain of God for setting up his government and taking the charge of needy millions and millions upon himself? How can we complain of the administrations of infinite rectitude and benevolence? On the other hand, is it not surprising, that every rational creature is not filled with admiration and praise, and united in sentiments with the ancient saints, saying, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof?"

With what exceeding joy should we contemplate his absolute supremacy, if we were not under the influence of an heart opposed to benevolence, and regardless of the general good? With what pleasure should we submit to his dominion, obey his glorious law, admire his wondrous grace and confide in his benevolent providence?

It is certainly far from all reason, that there should be a single objection against God or his dominion. If it should be laid aside, the immediate and total ruin of creation would ensue. It is this government, which puts happiness within the reach of any intelligent beings, and it is peculiarly the kingdom of grace, which opens a way for this sinful world to escape deserved wrath, and be reinstated in the favor of God. Of all creatures, mankind are the farthest, if possible, from having any cause to be dissatisfied with the government of God.

It is certainly matter of praise, that notwithstanding all the abuse which God has received from this world, he will not withdraw his government from us, nor abandon the designs of his grace. But let

his enemies meditate on those awful words of Christ, "Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." These considerations show us the proper grounds of resignation. And teach us the propriety of what John relates, Rev. xix. 6. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

DOULOS.

Harmony of Christianity.

(Continued from p. 182.)

PART II.

Experimental Religion.

CHRISTIANITY is a religion of the heart. It has its seat in the views and affections of the soul. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

This however is not peculiar to Christianity. It is true of all other religions, believed and practised by men, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." The words and actions of men are the expressions of the heart. All religion, whether true or false, is founded there.

As the state of the heart respecting religion, influences the practice, so it receives its moral quality from the nature of the affections. In the votaries of false religion, the affections are excited by religious conceptions which are false, or partial and unjust.

The religion of the bible is essentially different from all others, in many particulars; at present we notice that which follows.

All other religions of which we have any knowledge, present

a private or personal good, as the object of pursuit and enjoyment.

Christianity presents, to those who embrace it, that happiness which is founded in the views of the highest perfection and felicity of the moral system. To behold this, be active in promoting it, and enjoy it, is the highest felicity of a genuine Christian. The view already taken of doctrinal Christianity, clearly establishes this truth.

The manifest contrariety between Christianity and other religions, in this particular, to mention no other at present, accounts for some of the obvious appearances among men.

False religion is agreeable to the depraved heart of man, as it harmonizes with his selfish affections.

Genuine Christianity is opposed to all such affections, and adapted only to those which embrace the public good, and are spiritual, supernatural and divine.

The objects relished and pursued by selfish men, excite aversion and disgust to the spirit of Christianity, and what Christianity tastes and enjoys is disagreeable to the depraved, unsanctified heart. The truth of these observations is evident from the doctrines which have been stated, from many scriptural declarations, and from the history of man. We shall therefore proceed to mention a few leading branches of experimental religion, as they exist in the hearts of good men, in agreement with each other, and with doctrinal Christianity, of which regeneration may be considered as the basis.

1. Reconciliation to God.—

"The carnal mind is enmity against God." All its moral exercises are of this description, in

their tendency and issue. They are the various modifications of selfish affections; hence the Deity, viewed as opposed to their wicked purposes, and determined to punish sin, is the object of their aversion.

Indeed, sinners at ease in Zion, and under the smiles of prosperity, often think that they love God; having some conviction that their prosperity is from him, they are pleased, for "sinners love those who love them." But in a reverse of circumstances, they repine, and in effect call him a hard master; and when the wicked are enlightened by the Spirit of God, so as to perceive their danger and that God is angry with them and disposed to punish them, for their sins, it is common for their hearts to rise against God, and they are full of the sensible exercises of enmity against him, because he is opposed to their sinful course, and, as they believe, is determined to punish them.

This is abundantly evident from numerous cases; where the agency of the divine Spirit produces, in the consciences of sinners, that conviction of sin and danger which is usually previous to regeneration, as is known to all who have been conversant with persons under what has been commonly called a preparatory work of the Spirit. Hence we learn the absolute necessity of a change of heart in the sinner, in order to any right affections.

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The heart must be "circumcised to know the Lord," and the law of God written in it, or it will never display the graces of Christianity.

Reconciliation to God, presupposes the renewing agency of

the Holy Spirit, as do all Christian graces: This implies a conviction of the real character of God, as a holy and infinitely perfect being;—of the perfections of his government over man, and that it is fit he should do what he will with his own. It also implies a conviction that our opposition to God is totally inexcusable, and that he is righteous in the punishment of our transgressions, according to his threatening. This conviction is attended with a sense of heart of the spiritual beauty of his character, and the moral perfection of his government, founded in a firm belief of the truth and divinity of his word.

In such views of divine objects, the mind rests in God, as an infinite good, and worthy of the most profound adoration. His moral and providential government appear to a mind thus affected, to be divine, and worthy of the most cordial approbation, and of submission and obedience from all.

The sinner thus reconciled to God, judges and condemns himself for all his opposition. He justifies the divine government in its commands, threatenings and retributions, and desires to be forever devoted to the favor and service of God.

2. This reconciliation involves repentance towards God, even "repentance which is to salvation not to be repented of." It corresponds to the moral perfection of the divine character and government, as existing in the mind. He views personal transgressions with aversion and self-abasement, and approves the condemnation of the guilty. While to be pardoned, sanctified and restored to the favor and enjoyment of God, is viewed as the greatest

conceivable display of rich and sovereign grace.

3. Justifying faith is connected with repentance and reconciliation to God, and is highly essential in experimental Christianity. This consists in a belief of the gospel, founded on the testimony of God concerning Jesus Christ, as mediator between God and man; a cordial acquiescence in the gospel method of salvation, and humble trust in Christ for acceptance with God.

According to the gospel, those who believe in Christ, are so united to him that they are considered and treated by God as his seed, and admitted to the greatest favors on his account; and as a testimony of the Father's good pleasure in him, they are pardoned and justified, and made heirs of eternal life through him.

This faith implies all which has been mentioned as contained in reconciliation to God, and repentance for sin. It agrees to the doctrines of the mediation and atonement of Christ, and to that of the sinner's state of condemnation in himself, and his perishing need of such a Saviour.

It illustrates and confirms the doctrine of regeneration and of the free and sovereign grace of God in the salvation of sinners.

Regeneration is known by the effects produced. These effects are those Christian experiences which have been mentioned, together with all other graces of the Spirit.

This truth is illustrated by our Saviour in the parable of the sower; in his similitude of the good tree and the evil one and their respective fruits; for as all trees produce their own proper fruit and not that of another, even so the spirit of the world and the spirit

of Christianity produce their different and opposite effects in the hearts and lives of their respective subjects.

The immediate effect produced in the heart by regeneration is an enlarged and sublime spirit, a mind inclined to pursue the good of the moral system, in distinction from all selfish and personal objects, and to rest in that good as its portion.

This is exemplified in all the graces of Christianity. In the view of the fulness of God, it is supreme love to him and approbation of his government. In the contemplation of our own character it is repentance and humility. Respecting the gospel it is divine faith. As it terminates on the people of God it is brotherly love; to the miserable it is mercy; to the afflicted it is pity; to the wicked it is sorrow and good wishes; to enemies it is forgiveness and prayer for their best good. Under divine chastisements it is humility and submission; in affliction and distress it is submissive patience; in danger it is humble confidence in God; in prosperity it is thankful joy, in divine goodness, in the afflictions of others it is sympathy and prayer; in their prosperity it is joy and the good becomes common.

In contemplating the blessed and holy exercises of heaven and the emptiness and vanity of earth, it is weanedness from the world and heavenly mindedness. In the contemplation of our own vileness and the excellence of divine things it is ardent longing for conformity to God.

In view of his infinite fulness, and of human guilt and nothingness and of the universal and perfect government of God, and that the final issue of all present evil will be good, that the wrath of

man shall praise the Lord, and that he will restrain the remainder of wrath, it is rejoicing in God. This happy exercise which is begun by saints on earth, will be complete and eternal in heaven.

Enough has been said on experimental religion to shew its consistence with itself, the harmony of its parts with each other, and with the doctrines of Christianity. We proceed, lastly to consider the leading branches of practical religion, and mark their agreement with each other, and with Christianity as it exists in the doctrines of the bible and the experience of Christians.

PART III.

Practical Christianity.

THE practical duties of Christianity evince the tendency of its doctrines; they exemplify the inward exercises of experimental religion, and they consist in keeping the commandments of God.

The doctrines of the bible concerning that original, independent and eternal being, present him to the mind as possessed of infinite moral perfection, the creator and proprietor of the world and of man, the rightful Lord of all, and the only proper object of all religious worship and adoration, and worthy of unreserved obedience and submission from his creatures.

Experimental Christianity clearly supports the doctrines respecting the fulness of God, and his relations to man, and the fitness of his universal government.

Practical Christianity consists in the exhibition of this doctrine in a course of actions conformed to the divine commands. It is the expression of the heart in the ex-

ternal acts of divine worship, and in keeping God's commands.

It consists in doing that which the doctrines of scripture and the experience of good men agree in asserting ought to be done. The commands of Christianity are its doctrines and the experiences of Christians, clothed in the garb of divine authority, a conformity to these is practical Christianity.

Divine faith is an essential part of experimental Christianity; it rests on the scripture doctrine of redemption by Christ. In practice, it is the work of faith and labor of love. Faith overcomes the world, and teaches the believer to live above it, and have his conversation in heaven while he dwelleth on the earth.

The genuine Christian "looketh not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

The doctrines of Christianity uniformly teach, that the honor of God and the best good of his kingdom ought to regulate our actions and pursuits, in distinction from all private and personal considerations. And is it not true that the real Christian "looketh not on his own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's?" and "doeth to others as he would that others should do to him?" and doth not "the grace of God which bringeth salvation, teach the subjects of it, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world?"

The holy scriptures abundantly teach us that it will avail nothing to the salvation of the soul to "call Christ Lord, Lord, if we do not the things which he says."

The duties of Christianity correspond to our various relations to

God and man, and are the external expressions of those internal emotions and affections which constitute experimental Christianity.

(To be continued.)

Love to the House of God.

THE children of God, have always esteemed public worship an high honor and great privilege; and, a duty, by no means to be neglected. King David was in a kind of ecstasy, when the people called on him to attend the public worship of God. *I was glad, said he, when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city, that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.*

My design is, to consider some of the reasons, for which God's children are glad to go into the house of the Lord; or, why they love his public worship. And then shall make some observations, on the manner, in which they will manifest such respect.

Let it then be remarked, in the first place, that good men love to go to the house of the Lord, because it is, in a special sense, the place of *his honor and of his divine presence*. When Solomon had made an end of prayer, at the dedication of the temple, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house: and the children of Israel bowed themselves to the ground on the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord. And he answered Solomon—*Now, mine eyes shall be open,*

and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place. In the congregations of his saints, God, usually, gives some manifestations of his gracious presence, by awakening and convincing sinners, or by enlightening, correcting, guiding, comforting and strengthening his children. And, sometimes, his presence is remarkably evident, that all may see, reverence and adore him.

Such was often the case, when Aaron, in his pontifical robes, as a type of Christ, led the people of Israel to the door of the tabernacle, to receive answers, and to take orders from Jehovah, from between the cherubim. Such was the case, at the dedication of the temple, as cited above. Such was the case, on the day of pentecost, when, under the preaching of the apostles, more than three thousands of souls were added to the church. Such, blessed be God, has been the case, in many churches and congregations, in this and the neighboring states, for some years past. God, indeed, has often been manifest in our worshipping assemblies. Jesus Christ has, in many instances, been found walking in the midst of his golden candlesticks, the churches which he has redeemed and bought with his own blood. And he has given us abundant reason to believe, that he views them his crown of rejoicing; and will always be as a wall of fire round about them, and a glory in the midst of them.

True it is, Christ's glory and presence are not always thus evident; yet, we must not conclude, that he neglects his worshipping people: The promise of his presence, is sure to them that meet in his name, even to two or three; and is often communicated to them

in various gifts and graces. And were we intent on our duty, as we ought to be, his presence, doubtless, would be very manifest in our worshipping assemblies. But, alas ! our coldness and inattention, too often, dishonor him ; and provoke him to hide his face from us.

It is also to be remembered, that *as the house of the Lord* is a place of the divine presence ; so is it of receiving divine honors from his people. The social worship of saints confers special honor on Christ : It confesses him before men, and acknowledges the grace of God in the redemption of a lost world. And thus *the house of the Lord* is, in a special sense, the place where his honor dwelleth.

An assembly of believers, in the act of solemn worship, give the most glorious display of God's honor that can be given by mortals, on earth. They are redeemed by Christ—sanctified by his Spirit—subjected to his will—and living monuments of his praise. As such, worshipping in spirit and in truth, they display the honor and grace of God, beyond any thing to be seen, on this side the employments of saints made perfect. As Aaron, in all his pontifical robes, led the tribes of Israel up to the tabernacle, and presented their offerings to Jehovah ; so, Jesus Christ, the Great *High Priest* of our profession, goes before his people, as a sun and shield, in all their worship : And, adding his divine incense to their spiritual sacrifices, he presents them to the eternal Father, for his acceptance.

In such acts of social worship, all the attributes of deity are exhibited to us, and acknowledged and adored by us. Here, we see

sinners convinced, and born unto God ; and saints edified and built up in their holy faith. Here, we learn how the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. Here, we see the church adorned, as a bride, for her nuptials to the Lord. Here, we see Jesus crowned with honor and glory ; and anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

How is it possible for men, not to love the *house of the Lord* ! How can they shut their eyes against the surpassing beauty, and glory, and honor of Christ in his church ! Had we a temper of love and obedience to God ; or any conformity of heart to his character, we should rejoice to be where his honor dwelleth—we should long and thirst to see his power and glory, in the assemblies of his people.

Another reason, why good men love to go into the house of the Lord, is, that the church, with Christ at its head, is a *pillar and ground of the truth*. The children of truth love to be in the way of truth. Believers know the mind of Christ, in an eminent manner and degree. They *have an unction from the Holy One and know all things* : His Spirit, in them, testifies to the truth, as it is in Jesus ; and they feel and know the truth of the gospel. We read, *Great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory*. These are fundamental and distinguishing doctrines of Christianity : They are written on the heart, and brought in to the practice of all God's children. By meeting and conferring together, they find they have

the like evidences of grace ; and the same spirit of holiness—that they love the same things, seek the same things, and entertain a like hope of eternal life, through faith in Christ. In these things, they have fellowship with the Father, and the Son, and one with another : And so, feel that they have one common interest, and a near and dear relation. These discoveries make communion sweet, and excite them to meet in social worship, which enlightens the understanding, informs the judgment, invigorates faith, and warms the affections.

Thus, believers, the church of Christ are a kind of repository of the gospel doctrines. The Spirit imprints and seals gospel truths on their hearts and affections ; and they become supporters of the truth, in opposition to the errors and heresies, which wicked men utter against the holy religion of Jesus. And by bringing these truths into actual practice, they are *lights in the world, holding forth the word of life* ; and stand as *monumental pillars of the truth*, giving the lie to scoffing infidels, and to all that oppose the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are witnesses for God, that he is good and gracious ; and that if any perish, it will be their own fault.

This consideration is a strong motive, with good men, to go into the house of the Lord.—There are but two classes of men in the world, *friends and enemies of God*. Is it not desirable to be among his friends, and to unite with them in prayer and praise to the God of our lives, and the giver of all our mercies ? Is it not desirable to stand with them as a *pillar of the truth* ; and with one voice, and one heart, warn a sinful world

of their danger and of their duty ? Certainly, are we friends to God and Christ, we rejoice to meet with his church, and with them, set our seal to the truth, that God is righteous.

This, again, reminds me, that the public worship of God, is pleasant to all that love him. After a season of labor and toil, it is pleasant to retire to our closets, and meditate on spiritual and eternal things—to examine our title to the inheritance of saints ; and to go, like Moses, into the Mount, and take a view of the promised land. And while our affections were warm in heavenly meditation, would it not rejoice our hearts, to hear our neighbors say, *Come, let us go into the house of the Lord, to see his beauty, and to inquire in his temple ?*

The social worship of saints, is a beginning of the employments, and a foretaste of the enjoyments of the kingdom of glory. Have we no pleasure in the worship of God, in his earthly temples ; we have reason to fear, that we shall never join the society of saints, in his temple, which is above. Love to public worship, is an high evidence of love to God ; and of a meetness for the society of saints and angels. Agreeably to which, David said, *Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth. Gather not my soul with sinners.* The fellowship of saints, in social worship, warms the heart with love to God, and love to man ; and sets their affections on things above, that they are ready to cry out, *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! Blessed are they who dwell in thy house : they will be still praising thee.*

And it is worthy of remark, further, that as public worship is

pleasant to all good men ; so is it, very acceptable to God.—This is evident from the consideration, that he appointed a social worship, for the Jews, in the morning and evening sacrifice—on the sabbath, and on numerous days of feasting and fasting. So Christ, his apostles, and followers constantly observed the sabbath ; and often met, on other occasions, for social worship.

And it is observable, that God, frequently, signified his pleasure, on such occasions, by shewing his glory in the tabernacle, or by a voice from the mercy-seat : And in the days of Christian worship, by various gifts and graces ; and by the saving operations of his Holy Spirit.

And it is deserving of notice, that when God promised any peculiar blessings to his people, he, generally, added the privilege of his house. Thus, when he promised to increase his church, by the accession of the Gentiles, he said, *the flocks of Keder, and the rams of Nabaioth shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.* So, again, speaking of the privilege of his house, God promised it should be general without respect of persons, *Blessed is the man that keepeth my sabbath from polluting it. The sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant : even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in mine house of prayer : their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on mine altar ; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.*

I may also add, that the house

of the Lord, is a refuge in perilous times, and seasons of spiritual darkness. Nothing, in this world, will make hell tremble, and check the scoffs of infidels, like the united prayer of God's people in his house. They are the salt of the earth. For their sake, God bears with the wicked and withholds his judgments, for a season. For their sake, he cuts off the enemies of the cross, and punishes the wickedness of the times. For this cause, all good people love the house of the Lord, and delight in social worship.

I will now make some observations on the manner, in which, they will manifest such love and respect to the house of God.—

They will seek a convenient place, and a decent house, for the habitation of the Lord of Hosts. Like David, they will be ashamed, that the Lord should be the last and poorest served.

They will, also, with much prayer and carefulness, provide some one to minister in holy things. They will look to it, that he come in by the door—that he be called as was Aaron and that, like Paul and Barnabas, he be set apart to God's service, by prayer, fasting and laying on of the hands of the presbytery. It is not every one that runs, but he who runs orderly, that God approves.—Our Saviour was pleased to appoint an order of priesthood in his church, and will never forsake it, *Lo*, said he, *I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* Whoever comes not in this order, resisteth the gospel of Christ, and has no promise of the divine presence and blessing. The friends of God's house, therefore, will take heed whom they receive, and to whom they bid *God speed.*

They will also, maintain a pru-

dent discipline in the church ; and provide all things necessary, for a regular administration of special ordinances, that God may *glorify the house of his glory*. In a word, they will provide for, and support the gospel ministry in order and decency, for comfort and edification to themselves and others.

The friends of public worship, will live in expectation of such seasons, and meet them rejoicing. They pay the morning and evening sacrifice in a social worship, and meet the sabbath with delight. —When we expect the arrival of some dear friend, we keep the time in mind, and stand ready to receive him : so the friends of God's house, keep the sabbath in mind ; and will not suffer their secular affairs to intrude on holy time. They endeavor, as far as in them lies, to sanctify to God, all seasons of social worship, without deceit and without hypocrisy.

Nor will any thing, short of works of necessity and mercy, detain them from the place and employments they love.—They will endeavor to be, where God and their eternal interest call them. A slight indisposition, a little rain, or, any thing that would not detain them from business and amusements, on a week-day, will appear a pitiful excuse, for detaining them from God's business, on the sabbath, or, on any convenient season of social worship.

Nor will an affront from a neighbor, or from any body of men, detain us from public worship and divine institutions, if we really love the house of God. The Christian temper is charity and forgiveness. And, perhaps, my neighbor did not intend to affront me : but if he did, must I needs abuse him, because he abused me ? must I injure myself and insult

my God, because a man has injured me ? In vain we talk of our religion, while we act on such motives !

Yes, says one, but I disapprove of our minister—I am not edified by him—I can read better sermons at home.—Granted. But has not God, in his infinitely wise providence, made this provision ? And is he not more likely to send a blessing on his ordinances, and in his own way, than in yours ? And who shall dare to resist him, or to prescribe a better way ?—Such excuses may harden the heart against God and religion, but are not to be justified.

Those who love God, and are conscientious in his worship, abhor and detest all such excuses : and will endeavor, by constant precept and example, to recommend the observance of the sabbath. As lights in the world, they will hold forth the word of life, that others may see and glorify God.

I observe this once more, that they who love the worship of God's house, will study after brotherly love and unity.—“ A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. By *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” Brotherly love is a Christian temper : and they who love the house of the Lord, will manifest it. The friends of Christ are peacemakers ; and endeavor to walk in the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. They have fellowship with Christ, and one with another : his cause is their cause ; and his interest their interest. Party spirit and divisions in society, are grievous to good men : they gender strife and debate, sour the temper and unfit for God's service, in either party. Such things are the works of the flesh, and signs

of the latter day heresies. We are commanded to avoid them, and to attend to the *sure word of prophecy* : if any say, lo, here ; or lo, there, believe them not. We must try their spirit by the word of God ; and not by our darkened reason : *Philosophy*, will never lead us unto God and eternal life.

Those who love the house of God, will adhere to this rule ; and by the *sure word of prophecy* will heal divisions, and destroy the works of darkness ; and so, strengthen the brotherhood in knowledge, faith and love. They will not, willingly, leave or disturb a church and congregation, where they have unitedly served God : nor will they suffer it in others. *As living stones*, they are built up a spiritual house, and will not be scattered. *As a chosen generation*, they shew forth the praises of him, that called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, and therefore, follow after charity.

It will be perceived, that I have designedly confined my observations to the religious benefit and pious pleasures of God's children, in public worship. Men of the world may respect public worship for its moral and political influence on society ; but good men do more, they love it for its own sake—for its religious benefits and pious pleasures.

Many useful remarks might be made on this subject ; but I must only observe, that professors need closely examine themselves, as to the ground, on which, they profess to love the house of God. If they find not such views and feelings in public worship, and such expressions of them, as recited above, they have reason to fear they are no better, and do no more

than others, even publicans and sinners. If they be, indeed, children, they will not be easy and contented in public worship, unless they feel the power of religion, and see the beauty of the Lord, as well, as inquire in his temple. Neglect of public worship, or inattention in it, are dark signs : and do, at least, argue small degrees of grace, and too great indifference, as to further attainments. I speak here, of allowed neglect and inattention : for the most upright professor has seasons, in which, he has cause to cry, *My leanness, my leanness*. But if he can feel contented in any degree of spiritual attainments, short of perfection, he has but moderate love to God and divine things. Let professors think on this.

Professors, by neglect of public worship, injure themselves and dishonor God.—They see none, of his divine honor, as displayed in his house ; nor bear any part in bestowing honor upon him.—They publicly refuse to stand as pillars of the truth ; and to confess Christ before men.—They turn their backs on the protection of God's house, which he offers them, against the world, the flesh and the devil.—They lose the pleasures and comforts, which God's people feel, when, with united hearts and voices, they address the throne of grace.—They practically, condemn God's authority ; and virtually, deny their allegiance to Christ, his king in Zion.

Thus they join with the wicked to dishonor God and religion—they set a bad example before others—and become abettors of infidelity and loose morals.—Many, not distinguishing between principles, and the irregular walk

of professors, first doubt of the reality of religion ; and soon denounce the whole a cheat.—In this, they are awfully left of God—they become fit subjects for the temptations of Satan—and he will not be idle. Having no good moral principles within, they lie at the control of their passions—reason is unheeded and conscience is silent—good is their evil and evil their good.

These are the natural and actual consequences of the neglect and abuse of public worship : and coming through the medium of God's children, they dishonor God and religion, much more than all that the enemies of the cross could do without them.

This consideration calls loudly on us, as professors, to consider our ways—"to be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die."—Do we reverence divine authority—are we wise to seek our own happiness, for time and eternity—and do we desire a plentiful outpouring of the Holy Spirit, on our churches and congregations, we shall long to see the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple—we shall constantly take our families to the house of the Lord on his sabbath ; and lead them daily to the throne of grace, in the morning and evening sacrifice.

This is our duty. And we have no reasonable excuse for neglect : the means are easy—the work is pleasant—and the end will be glorious. In the exercise of social worship, if not wanting to ourselves, we shall meet with God—learn our duty—obtain comfort—establish our hearts in the faith and mystery of the gospel ; and thus, grow more and more into the divine likeness—we shall set a good example before others,

and lift up a mighty standard against infidelity. In this, God's glory, and our happiness are united. Let us then act in character, and walk worthy of our vocation in the gospel. And if we are faithful to God and ourselves, in public worship and social prayer, we may defy all the arts of hell and earth to separate us from Christ ; or to dissolve order in society. But it must not be forgotten, that in all these things, we are wholly dependent on the aids of the Holy Spirit, for light and strength. Let us, therefore, *in every thing*, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make known our requests unto God—His grace will be sufficient for us.

ISRAEL.

On the imperfect state of holy affections in young converts.

WE find in the bible many passages, which speak of the kingdom of God, representing it as being exceedingly small in its origin, but increasing gradually, till it finally absorbs all others in itself. In one place it is compared to a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which afterwards became a great mountain and filled the whole earth : In another, to a grain of mustard seed, which, it is said, is the smallest of all seeds, but when it is sown, and is sprung up, it becomes a great tree, in the branches of which the fowls of the air may lodge. Although these representations primarily respect the kingdom of our Redeemer in the *world*, yet we may doubtless with propriety consider them, as being equally applicable to the kingdom of grace in the *heart* of each individual member ; and as suggesting this general idea, that the

kingdom of grace or real holiness is at first exceedingly small in the hearts of Christians, though by a gradual increase it finally fills the whole heart, and subdues every thing to itself.—The truth of this idea, however, that holiness is at first so exceedingly small, does not rest entirely on such a dubious application of scripture, but is fully evident from several other considerations :—as,

1. Christians may continue to grow in grace many years, and yet be far from a state of perfection. That Christians ordinarily grow in grace is plain from many passages in scripture : “The path of the just” we read “shineth more and more until the perfect day”—and, “the water, that I shall give him,” says our Saviour, “shall be in him, a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” It is equally plain, also, that after a long life of growth in grace Christians are very imperfect : Many years after his conversion, the apostle Paul could say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” And this perfectly agrees with Christian experience : After the longest life spent in the service of God, under the greatest advantages, and with the most unwearied application, Christians invariably find, that their holy affections are still in a very imperfect state. And how could this be, unless these holy affections were at first *exceedingly* small.

2. As Christians grow in grace they usually grow in a sense of their own sinfulness. Our Saviour taught, “if any man should put his hand to the plough and look back, he would not be fit for the kingdom of God ;” thereby teaching us to be prepared for unexpected trials, as well proba-

bly from within ourselves as from without. And the most striking expressions of a sense of sinfulness, which are recorded in the bible, came from persons, who had made considerable progress in a holy life. Job, after his trials had proved the reality and holy nature of his religion, says, “I abhor myself and repent as in dust and ashes :” Isaiah, after being favored with some remarkable discoveries of the majesty of God, cries out, “woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips :” And Paul, after many years diligent profiting in the school of Christ, exclaims, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” And with this agrees the experiences of Christians in all ages : They are at first ready to think, that the victory is accomplished, but they soon learn, that they have but just entered the contest.—Now if this be true, must it not be, that they at first estimated their comparative sinfulness very erroneously ? That their sinfulness was much greater than they supposed, and, on the contrary, the kingdom of grace much smaller ? This argument receives additional force from this consideration, that, during all this time, in which this sinfulness had been apparently increasing in their own view, they had been, perhaps, in fact growing in grace ; so that the kingdom of grace in their hearts was, perhaps, never greater, than when they have the greatest sense of their own sinfulness. How exceedingly small, then, must it have been at first ? How fitly is it compared to a grain of mustard seed ?—

But how, it is asked, does this agree with the appearance of young converts ? Are not their

thoughts and affections fixed most on spiritual things at first? Is not their zeal and engagedness in religion, then, the greatest? And how is this consistent with the idea, that their holy affections are so exceedingly small?—In answer to this enquiry, the following things may be observed.

1. The peculiar situation of young converts puts a remarkable check upon their sinful inclinations. This is evidently the case under conviction: The course of their conduct is then totally altered. Much of their time is now spent in reading the word of God, in calling upon him in prayer, in attending religious meetings, and in conversing or reflecting upon the concerns of eternity; and this change is not the effect of any real holiness of heart, but merely of those views, which they now have of themselves, and their situation. These views give a present check to all their sinful inclinations, and make them appear almost totally different persons, from what they were before. And may it not be, that the influence of this check continues for a considerable time, after the kingdom of grace has been set up in their hearts? May not, therefore, a considerable portion of their attention to things of a religious nature be considered as the effect of this check, rather than the fruit of real holiness?

2. The recent and remarkable deliverance, which they have experienced, is such as must have a peculiar influence upon their natural feelings, and produce, in this way, much of the appearance of true religion. If we have been in any great temporal danger, and experienced a remarkable deliverance, it always has a great effect upon our feelings and conduct. We rejoice exceedingly in our de-

liverance, are exceedingly thankful to our deliverer, and are very ready to make him some grateful return: And, why should not a deliverance from eternal danger, by the power of God, have a similar effect? Christians are sanctified but in part, much selfishness still remains in them, and, therefore, may we not well suppose that a considerable part of their apparent love for God, and engagedness in his service, is the fruit of selfishness, rather than of true benevolence?

3. The first zeal and engagedness of young converts invariably subsides, after a certain time, and gives place to a calm, steady and rational observance of the divine commands. From this we must suppose, either that Christians, instead of growing, do invariably, after a little time, decay; or, that there is much more of the appearance of true religion in young converts at first, than of the reality. And is not the latter much the most scriptural supposition? And is not this supposition further countenanced by this, that whenever persons after conviction attain a false hope, they invariably have the same appearance as the real converts? The same attention to spiritual things, the same zeal for God, the same engagedness in promoting his cause? But notwithstanding all this, it is not supposed that they have in their breasts a single spark of divine grace to light up this appearance, and therefore, when the ferment of their natural feelings has subsided, all is gone. May it not be, then, that during the first engaged and zealous period of the real converts, true grace or real holiness in his heart, is like a mustard seed, exceedingly small, and, at the same time, so greatly obscu-

red by the rubbish of natural affections, as scarcely to be perceived.

The view which we have taken of this subject, suggests a few important reflections.

1. Young converts have much less of true religion, than what they are generally thought to have, or even than what they themselves think that they possess. Hence, in their future lives they almost invariably disappoint both themselves and others.

2. It is exceedingly difficult to distinguish real religion, from the working of natural affection. If the greater part of that, which appears in young minds, is to be thrown away, by what marks shall we distinguish that which is to be retained and cultivated? Well may Christians be directed to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.

3. Young converts should be humble. What do they find in themselves, beside the workings of natural affections, under which the small seed of grace or holiness, is almost entirely hidden.

4. They should be charitable toward old professors. If old professors are not as zealous and engaged in religion as the young convert appears to be, they are often censured and condemned, as being in a cold, formal, lifeless state and their performances greatly despised. But which possesses the greatest share of true religion? Let the young convert learn to be humble, and to esteem others better than himself?

5. True religion does not consist so much in appearances of zeal and engagedness in the worship of God, as in a calm, steady and affectionate observance of every duty enjoined in both the first and second tables of the divine law.

EUBULUS.

The obligation of children to be kind and attentive to their parents, particularly addressed to those who have parents in the decline of life.

SUBJECTS which are wholly practical have their importance as well as those which more immediately respect doctrines; and cannot be dispensed with, by those who write or speak for the religious instruction of all classes, consistently with declaring the whole counsel of God, and rightly dividing the word of truth. In illustrating the subject proposed, the following observations may be made:—

1. Those, who have parents in advanced life, may learn their obligation to be kind and attentive to them, by looking to the example of Christ.

The Saviour was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Every part of his life was an exemplification of the nature of true holiness. In all his relations to mankind, he did that which was perfectly right and agreeable to God's holy law. The subject before us confines our thoughts to a single branch of his conduct; viz. to his treatment of his mother. When suspended on the cross, he observed among the spectators, and standing near his cross, Mary his mother, and his mother's sister, and Mary Magdalen; and with them also John, his beloved disciple and intimate friend. To these persons how affecting, how mysterious was the scene? The mother of the dying Saviour was now probably a widow, and had been for some time. Evidence of this is gathered, from its being particularly mentioned by the Evangelist, that she came with his brethren to see Christ, when he was

fulfilling his ministry; that she was present at the marriage in Cana; that she came to be a spectator of the crucifixion of her son, without mentioning her husband, in any of these instances; and particularly that the Saviour, with his dying breath, commended her to the care of John, as if she were a woman in a lonely, bereaved state. Tho' honored above all women, by being the mother of our Saviour, she was nevertheless subject to like passions as we all are. She possessed natural affection, and was, undoubtedly, acquainted with the feelings of a mother's heart.

As a divine person, Christ was without parents, and without beginning; but as God manifest in the flesh, or as to his human part, he was born of a woman, and was nourished and brought up by an affectionate mother, whom he owned in this relation. For her in her lonely state, he manifested great kindness. He did not leave the world, until he had made provision for her comfortable support. Knowing the anguish of her soul, when she saw him agonizing in death on the cross, he pitied her case, and immediately adopted a measure which might administer some relief under her troubles. This appears from John xix. 26, 27. "*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*" From the phrase, "*Behold thy son,*" many receive the idea that Christ meant himself; but he evidently had reference to John. He led his mother and beloved disciple mutually to adopt each other, as parent and child. Here

the Saviour set a pattern of filial affection. Shall we say, he did this solely for his mother's sake; or shall we say, he designed herein to set an example, for those who are children, to follow? He did it, no doubt, from a sense of obligation to his mother then advancing towards old age; and what is more important, that he might in this, as in all the transactions of his life, be a light to the world. The plain language of his conduct to all who stand in the relation of children is this—Be kind and attentive to your parents in old age. Consider their trials and their wants, and let no exertions be wanting, on your part, to render the evening of their pilgrimage state, as easy and as agreeable as may be. To enforce this idea, the words of the apostle may be pertinently applied—*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.* The argument now used, to inculcate the duty of being kind to aged parents, is calculated to find its way to the conscience, and is not easily evaded. It supposes, that a compliance with this duty is necessary, to give evidence of being a follower of Christ, and cannot be dispensed with without reproaching the Christian character.

2. The same duty is strongly enforced in the law, and in other parts of scripture. The words of God's holy law are very explicit, which are these:—*Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Will it be said, that this commandment has a sole respect to children in a state of minority, and while they are under the immediate control of their parents? That it has respect to children in a state of minority, is readily admitted; but the duty

enjoined is not *limited* to them. Our parents continue to be our parents as long as they live ; and as such they are to be honored. It is true, there is a sense in which children, when they commence heads of families, are said to forsake their parents. This, however, is far from implying a disrespectful treatment of them. They then only go out into the wide world, and cease to lean upon their parents, as was the case when they were in childhood. It is clearly the spirit of the divine law, that children are to honor their parents, as long as the relation continues. But how can they be said to honor their parents, when they neglect them, or are unkind to them in old age ? We need not hesitate to adopt the sentiment, that when children are inattentive to their aged and infirm parents, they are guilty of dishonoring them, and of breaking the divine law. And he, who knowingly breaks one commandment, is guilty of all.

The obvious duty, now inculcated, was notoriously violated, by the scribes and pharisees, at least in certain cases. But, mark with what plainness the Saviour reproved them, "*Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition ? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother : and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honor not his father, or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.*" Here, the Saviour pointedly reproved those, who had adopted a custom, contrary to God's law, which led

them to neglect their aged parents.

3. Gratitude to parents forbids their being neglected in old age. Mankind are born into the world in the most absolute state of dependence. We know they are dependent on *God*, in every period of their lives ; but in their infant state, they are wholly dependent on their fellow-creatures. Ordinarily the care of them, in this feeble state, falls to the lot of their parents ; and great is their task in nourishing and bringing them up. On their account, they have many hours of anxiety—for their sakes, they have many sleepless nights ; and, from the time of their birth, until they go away from under their care, they are continually carrying burdens for their sakes, and even afterwards. It is impossible to describe the feelings of a parent's heart. These feelings are never made known, until experience makes them known. They who have had the privilege of being brought up by parents, ought to feel a great obligation to imitate the Saviour's kindness to his mother, and to do every thing in their power to assuage the sorrows, and to lighten the burdens which come upon their parents, in their declining years.

4. The situation of parents in old age demands kind treatment from their children. How different are the circumstances of people in advanced life, from what they were in the meridian of their days ? Then, they stood at the head of their families ; their children were dependent on them ; the cares of building up society devolved on them, and they could be active at home or abroad. But, now their conditions are greatly altered ; their children

have families, and, perhaps, mostly scattered at a distance from them; necessity compels them to give up the oversight of business; their memories fail; their influence in society is gone; and they are fast decaying. The evil days have come, and the years in which they say they have no pleasure in them. The keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and when they look out of the windows they are darkened. All the daughters of musick are brought low. They are afraid of that which is high, fears are in the way, and the almond-tree flourishes. In this period of life, there are many things taking place, which, to nature, are peculiarly trying and mortifying, beyond what any one conceives, until he himself comes to the period. All this is a reason why children should be kind and attentive to their parents, when bowing down under the infirmities of age. Their condition demands kindness and attention.

5. If children would do as they would be done by, they will be constrained to manifest kindness to their aged parents. They may be called upon to consider, that if their own lives are spared a few years, their parents will be in their graves, and they will take their places, and become the old people. They will experience the infirmities which have been stated, and they will stand in need of this kind and attentive treatment for which I am pleading. Let them now, therefore, do as they would be done by. Let them now teach their own children, if they have any, by their example, how old people, and people in second childhood, are to be treated. If they live within convenient dis-

tance, let them visit their parents—labor to comfort them under the burdens of old age, converse freely with them, and pray with them, as perhaps their parents used to pray with and for them. It is acknowledged, that the circumstances of children may be such, that they cannot bestow much of this world's goods on their parents, however needy they may be; but if they cannot do this, they can do other things. They can visit them, they can labor to keep their parents from having the very painful idea that they are neglected.

The subject of the foregoing address is not without its importance, tho' rarely bro't into public view. The cause of religion may be deeply wounded, by reason of inattention to the duty which has now been inculcated.

H.

MESS'RS EDITORS,

PLEASE to insert in your Magazine, the following, if you think proper:

IN an ancient confession of faith, owned by the French church, they say, as in the second article thereof, We acknowledge one God, making himself known to man, by his works of creation, providence, and the government of the world; and also, in and by his word.

And then after mentioning by name, the several books of scripture, from Genesis to Revelations, they in the fourth article say; We acknowledge these books to be canonical; and to contain the rule of faith.

In the fifth article, they say, We believe that the word therein contained, did proceed from God alone, and that these books do

contain the sum of all that truth, that is necessary to the worship of God, and to our salvation: nor is it lawful for angels or men, to make any alteration thereof, by adding to it, or taking from it; nor hereunto may any ways suffice, either any antiquity, customs, or human wisdom, judgments, edicts, decrees, councils, visions, or miracles.

In another article they acknowledge, That the holy scriptures teach us, that in the divine essence, there do subsist three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

In another article, they say, We believe that man was at first created, holy and upright, after the image of God; but by his fault fell from that grace which he received; and alienated himself from God, the fountain of righteousness, and of all good; and is by nature altogether corrupt, depraved in heart, and hath wholly lost his integrity.

In another article, they say, We believe that all the race of Adam, are infected with that contagion, which we call original sin.

In another article, they say, We believe that out of this universal corruption, and condemnation, wherein all mankind are involved; God did, in his eternal and immutable purpose, elect, in Christ, some to be delivered, not having respect therein, to any good works of their own.

In another article they say, We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, did assume our nature; and that in one person, he is both God and man.

In the last article of that confession of faith which I shall here mention, they say, We believe that God will have the world gov-

erned by laws, and police, to prove, as it were, bridles, to restrain the immoral lusts of the world.

How different the foregoing confession of faith, from the present creed, and practice of the Romish church! May it not be said of them, and those who are for simbolizing with them either in the Romish or in the present atheistical, and deistical errors, and delusions, as was to Lucifer of old. *Isai. xiv. 12.* How art thou fallen! And when we consider how greatly many among us have deviated from the sacred truths, and simplicity of the gospel, how proper and necessary must appear that divine direction, in *Rev. ii. 5.* Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works. Let those who set themselves to oppose religion, which has for ages past, and will ever be found, to be the greatest ornament, and fundamentally necessary to the well being and comfort of any community; let those who set themselves to oppose the word of God; who lightly esteem and reject the holy scriptures, reckoning them to be false, illusory, and needless, let such, timely and seriously consider, repent and reform, lest the fruit of their own doings be recompensed upon them, as fighting against God, and forsaking their own mercies; as they love their own souls, and would consult their own highest, and best interest and good, and that of their children and successors; let them be persuaded to renounce what is so contrary thereto: and let none imagine, and say, that what is so manifestly evident from the word of God, and the experience of past ages, conducive to man's happiness and comfort, as

are religion and government, are owing merely to priestcraft, and that they are but a delusion; they who think and conclude so, are under a great and dreadful deception! and will sooner, or later, find themselves to be deceived. PHILALETHES.

The labor of persons, divinely enlightened, illustrated, and the subject applied to the conscience, in four letters, from VIATOR to CHRISTIANUS.

(Continued from p. 102.)

LETTER III.

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

IN my two former letters I endeavored to take a brief view of that, for which, those persons labor, who have been divinely enlightened.

My present object is to help you and myself wisely to improve, what was then written. It is therefore worthy of remark, that if the observations which have been made, are just, those persons, who neither possess the Christian spirit, embrace the gospel doctrines, nor perform the common duties required of the saints, in the word of God, have never been savingly enlightened, although they may have had the common influences of the Holy Spirit, been the subjects of great awakenings and comforts, thought themselves Christians, joined to the visible church, and for many years, stately attended the Lord's supper!

There is, my dear friend, great reason to fear, that many persons who profess religion, have not the grace of God in their hearts!

In my travels, I have had considerable opportunity, in different States, towns, and societies, to

make observations upon the conduct of the professors of religion. And I have found some, who lived in the total neglect of family prayer, paid little attention to the scriptures, profaned in many ways, the holy sabbath, neglected the public worship of God, unless in very pleasant weather, were often absent upon sacramental occasions, negligent in the religious instruction of their families, upon sabbath days, and upon all other occasions.—I have found their examples bad, in several other respects: I have seen some to be light and vain, and in a degree profane in their conversation, slack in paying their debts, worldly minded and covetous!—I have seen others idle, profuse, fond of taverns and places of public resort, fond of ardent spirits, and of loose and unprofitable company!!

Many persons conduct, as tho' they imagined nothing more necessary to constitute a Christian, than to belong to the church!

How many who profess religion, discover no relentings of heart for sin, make no pretensions to communion with God, lay no special restraint upon their appetites or passions, and rarely or never speak about religion, unless it is to cavil at some of its most essential doctrines? How many, instead of *letting their light shine around them, so that others by seeing their good works, might be led to glorify their father, who is in heaven*, wound religion in the most sensible manner, giving great occasion by their deeds, *to the enemies of God to blaspheme*? And do it with impunity? For in this day of declension it is next to impossible, so far as I am acquainted, to support that strict discipline, which would be for the honor of religion!

It is with extreme pain, I have mentioned the foregoing failings ! I should never have done it, if they were of a private nature, but they are generally known, and in the mouth of every infidel. If it were possible I would gladly hide them from the world ! But it is utterly impossible ! It appears therefore to me, to be lawful and expedient, to mention them in this letter, for our warning, in as much as the apostle has said 'let us not sleep as do others : but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith, and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.'

We are always in danger, my Christian friend, of being injured by bad examples : ' Evil communications corrupt good manners : ' And ' One sinner destroyeth much good.' We are particularly in danger, from the bad examples of the professors of religion, ' the light of the world,' and ought to be on our guard. Were it once to become fashionable for professing Christians to have nothing but their profession, and occasional attendance upon the Lord's table, to distinguish them from the world, we should be in danger ourselves, of growing cold and careless, and of giving a deep wound to that blessed cause, we, professedly, wish above all things to advance ! I hope we should not finally apostatize ! I know we should not, if the special grace of God has ever taken possession of our hearts, for Christ hath said—' And I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.' But we might lose

our first love, and wander far from the path of duty, and become for a season blind guides to our fellow-sinners ! We ought carefully to guard against a spirit of apathy, and labor to keep our hearts glowing with love to God and good-will to men. Instead of indulging ourselves in irregularities, we ought ' to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Redeeming the time, because the days are evil : '—to possess that faith which is not dead—to have a hope different from that of the hypocrite's : which, shortly will be ' as the giving up of the ghost ! ' We ought to be looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of that great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

True religion, we may be assured, has no tendency to make persons trust in an old experience, nor careless in their manner of living ; but desirous of fresh anointing from the Lord, of breathing the spirit of real piety, of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints ; and of ' adding to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge. And to knowledge temperance : and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness. And to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.'

Those persons who are satisfied with their present attainments in religion, it may be presumed want religion, only as a traveller does a boat, to carry him over a river which he cannot ford, and if they could only be safe, they would not trouble themselves about it ! Christ and his cause would have no share of their affection nor ser-

vice. Though they may now hope to be saved by his merit, they have no friendship to him. We may safely conclude therefore that their 'hope,' is not 'sure and stedfast.' Those who have this hope, always love the object of their hope for his own sake; 'whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee;' and they labor to 'purify themselves as he is pure.'

Religion is not a thing which lies dormant, but a living operative principle in the hearts of those in whom 'God hath shined to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;' or it consists in holy exercises, and a corresponding conduct: 'He that believeth on me, as the scriptures have said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

It is totally in vain for persons to pretend, that they profess religion, if they are destitute of all the graces of the Holy Spirit, deny the distinguishing doctrines of grace, and allowedly walk like the 'enemies of the cross of Christ!' 'Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.'

Notwithstanding the imperfections, which I have mentioned, of some of the professors of religion, I must say, I have generally found more or less wherever I have travelled, who appeared not to love in word and tongue, but in deed and in truth: they have not only carefully attended to the ordinances of the gospel,

which I think all who love Christ ought to do, but appeared to understand the holy nature of religion, and conscientiously to enter into the practice of it. They have said, and appeared to say it, in the sincerity of their hearts: 'Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb.'

I am yours, &c.

VIATOR.

(To be continued.)

A Narrative of a Revival of Religion in the South Parish of KILLINGLY, in the years 1800 and 1801, communicated to the Editors by the Rev. ISRAEL DAY, pastor of the church in said Parish.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE read, with pleasure, the various accounts of the revivals of religion, in a number of towns, in this state published in your useful magazine.

When I reflect on the moral state of man, and the treatment which the gospel of our blessed Redeemer has met with, in our churches and congregations, I feel disposed to join with my brethren, in devout admiration; that God should look upon us, and make us so gracious a visit: on the other hand, when I call to mind the covenant between the Father and the Son, the revealed mode of God's supporting his church,

by bringing those who are of us to build the old waste places, and to repair the breaches of former generations; that this is effected by the spirit of the Lord, being poured out on the seed of his people, and his blessing on their offspring; the promise of success to the gospel, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church of Christ; that her sons are to come from far and her daughters from the ends of the earth; that Christ is to have a seed that shall serve him, which shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation; and as God has told his people that he will never leave Zion till all things which he has promised her be fulfilled.—These things bring us to look for those displays which God is now making with reference to Zion: and, also to long and pray for greater things than have yet taken place, which tend to encourage the friends of Zion and confound infidels. From a conviction of these things I am thence to give a narrative of the late work of God in the south parish, in Killingly.

In the year 1776, it pleased God to send down the divine Spirit, on the people, like gentle rain, which lasted, by its convincing and converting influence, though not in any extraordinary degree, for more than two years. In which time, there were about fifty persons received into the church. From this time, the friends of Zion gained ground, which was not wholly lost, for twelve years. In the year 1788, it pleased God, once more, to look, in mercy, on a people who had abused his kindness, and were ripening fast for divine judgments. By the sovereign influence of the Holy Spirit, he set home his word preached and means enjoy-

ed, in such a manner, that dry bones began to shake, and many were hopefully made alive, as appeared, by their after walk and conversation. At this period, about forty persons were added to the church.

I would here note, that, from the first mentioned time, of the revival of the work of God, there has been a conference meeting kept up, in the middle of the society, for the most part, weekly, till the present time. In which, the children of God have had comfort, in praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and have found that they do prosper who love her.

For a number of years, after the last mentioned revival of religion, there was great harmony both in the church and congregation; till an unhappy dispute arose, about removing the meeting house; which was very prejudicial to the peace and harmony of both. This dispute lasted for a number of years: and it is to be feared that, with some individuals, it will last, as long as they live. It is likely that prejudices in such things, are, in many instances, a means of Satan's making the bands of sinners strong; and, that they never find out their fatal mistake, till they are lost. As there were many removals, from the church, by death, and some to distant parts of the country, it was greatly reduced in numbers, and those who remained, had in some measure, lost their first love. Thus, from the foregoing unhappy circumstances, it seemed, for a season, that the church and congregation were like a ship, at sea, tossed in a storm. At the same time, while these contentions opened a door for the increase of vice, sinners were not backward to improve their opportunity. But a

merciful God, in some degree, calmed the tumult of the people; the body of the church became comfortably united, our meeting house decently repaired, and there was a little more prospect of enjoying a degree of peace and order among us. But, after all, it was painful to observe the low state of vital piety, family religion and practical godliness.

However, notwithstanding all these embarrassments, God was pleased to appear on the side of truth. In the beginning of October 1800, there were some appearances which began to encourage the praying saint. About the same time, we were favored with a visit, from a young man, in the ministry, from the state of New-Hampshire, who was formerly from this parish, and was one, who appeared to be a subject of religion, among us, in the fore-mentioned revival, in the year 1788; having been absent almost twelve years. At the close of a sermon, he gave the people an account of the work of God, among the people, where he resided. He then addressed those who were his former companions, by enquiring of them, the state of their souls, &c. This seemed to be a means of rendering the whole assembly very solemn. In the evening a conference was attended and a larger number of young people were present, than usually met, on such occasions. At the close, the people were informed, that our weekly conferences, would be attended, at my house: and as there appeared to be a degree of thoughtfulness taking place, on the minds of some; they were admonished not to stifle the motions of the Holy Spirit, but to meet with their Christian friends, the next Friday, to confer

further on the important subject. In the course of the same week, I called at a house, to converse with a young woman, whom I found before, under some awakening. When I came to converse with her, I found her under deep impressions of soul: her mother, coming into the room, was somewhat affected, knowing that something affected her daughter, but did not know that it was a concern for her soul. I found the mother was in the like case. On Friday, the time for our conference, instead of a few, as formerly, my house was filled; and solemnity sat on the countenances of many; while a few were pricked in their hearts. It soon began to appear that many had been under serious impressions, for some time, and kept it to themselves; but now, were under necessity of making it known.

From this time, our meetings for preaching and conference were crowded and solemn. We were under necessity, for want of room, of leaving a private house and the school house, and of repairing to the meeting house. For a number of months, in the winter season, it seemed that eternal things engrossed almost the whole attention of the congregation. All appeared to be interested in the truths, doctrines and duties of religion.—Thus, they were anxious to hear and know what they should do to be saved.

My house was frequently resorted to, by enquirers, and the scenes were truly affecting. Persons, from twelve years of age, to forty, and so on to sixty, just beginning to know that they were sinners, against God. They, who had often heard of their dreadful state, while stupid, now began to confess, with tears, that they were

under the curse of God's holy law : that, all their lives, they had despised Christ and his religion. Some seemed to awake, as from a dream, and wondered that these things had never been seen by them before. One expressed herself thus, "When I was first awakened, I thought my life must be reformed, and I would set about the work of reformation, in earnest ; but I soon found that my heart was so wicked there was no reforming it. I found that God must change this heart of mine, or I was undone forever." Others, when first awakened, had views of their sins of omission and some actual sins which they had committed ; but by being followed, by the spirit of God, they soon found that their hearts were at enmity with God : and, in some instances, persons have said, that their unhappiness was, that they felt sensible enmity against God. It gave them pain to see what God was, and what he was doing and would do. God made use of various means to awaken the careless, besides the preaching of the gospel. Sometimes passages of scripture came like arrows to the heart. Such as these ; *"The axe is laid to the root of the tree, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."* One, who had religious parents and ancestors, was struck with the thought, that the piety of the family should cease in him. Some, that their husbands, or wives, or their young companions were setting out in religion and that they were like to be left. The thought of being left of God would often strike them to the heart.

As the work of conviction in-

creased, they were driven from their hiding places, and obtained more clear and distinct views of the extensive nature of the divine commands ; and found their hearts to be a fountain of iniquity, from whence flowed all their actual sins. Those, who were brought to receive the light of divine truth shining in the face of Jesus, previous thereto, were made sensible, that in heart, they were so opposed to holiness, that they lay wholly at the mercy of God ; that God would be just to cast them off forever ; and that his declaration, *"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,"* was their only ground of hope ; that it would be just in God to leave them to be vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction ; or, if it should please him, to bring them to a cordial submission and make them vessels of mercy, prepared for glory, it would be all grace ; and that they, of all the saved race, should be most indebted to sovereign mercy. As to those, who are viewed hopefully converted ; with respect to the manner and circumstances of obtaining comfort, and the degree of joy and peace, there has been a difference. In a few instances, their conviction has been short and their joy sudden, being filled with admiring views of God, discovered in his law, in his gospel, and in his righteous government. The words of the Psalmist were sweet to them.—*"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice."* Also, the natural world appeared to shine with divine lustre, and in its various ways, to praise God ; and, they said, they longed to join in praising him forever. But, it was the case with many, that their convictions were long. Some persons, who were brought up in

families, where religion had been maintained, had been under convictions, at seasons, from their childhood. By the Spirit of God, such were, often, brought gradually to hope that their hearts were brought into submission to him. It was often the case, that this was effected, by a reflex view of the working of the Spirit of God on their hearts. In some instances, such, on receiving light, concluded that their convictions were gone and God had left them to a hard heart; for, before this change, they had thought, if God should convert them, they should not only look on themselves as very holy and good, but they should know that God had renewed their hearts, by his grace. But, now, to see themselves such wicked, ill-deserving and hell-deserving wretches, as much so and if possible more so, than they were before the time of their awakening, it could not be that their hearts were renewed by grace, tho' they sensibly felt the contention between God and their own hearts to be at an end. But, by being often bro't to give up themselves, and all that was dear to them, into the hands of a sovereign God, without any reserve; by beholding the beauty and excellency of the divine law, which condemned them; the glory of Christ as the end of the law to all who love and believe on him, they could not refrain from believing, trusting and committing their souls to him. Some have said, that their views of the sufficiency of Christ were such, that if they had *many souls*, they would trust them *all in his hand*, and hope for salvation in his name.

Previous to the religious attention among us, public worship was greatly neglected by many

whole families, as well as by individuals; but when God began to work, how comforting to Zion's friends, to see them flocking to hear the word preached, on the sabbath and at other seasons! It appeared, that they felt themselves interested in the things which they heard. We had no disorder, or outcries, so as to make any disturbance in our public meetings; yet the solemnity was like going to the grave, or to judgment. No one, but those who know by experience, can conceive the joy which has taken place among the people of God. In regard to family prayer; in some instances, where there were but very few, who called upon the name of the Lord, formerly, now almost whole neighborhoods have engaged in this duty; that if one were to pass among them, at certain seasons, he would be constrained to say, surely God is in this place. Parents, in a public manner, devoting themselves, their little ones, and all that they have to the Lord.

How pleasing the seasons, to behold the aged and the young of both sexes leaving the follies, peculiar to their age, and becoming followers of the lowly Jesus. The pious parents' heart, in a number of instances, partook of joy inexpressible to see the divine blessing poured on them, agreeably to the promise, in Isaiah, "*I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring;*" to see those, who were of themselves, arising and building the old waste places, and repairing the breaches of former generations. In a few instances, almost whole families have been affected, and they have espoused the cause of Christ, before a vain and deluded world.

Since the work of God revived, in this place, sixty-four persons have been united to the church ; and ninety have been baptized, on their own, or on their parents' account. On one sabbath, six households were presented and baptized, containing twenty-three children. This circumstance, accompanied with a sermon, on the duty of parents to their children, under the divine agency, was made a mean of good to many. It was noticed by children. In one instance a child asked her mother, who made no profession of religion, "Mamma, why am not I baptized?" This went to the mother's heart. We hope the wound was healed by the blood of Jesus, and she enabled to give herself, her children and all that she had into the hands of God.

Those who have made a profession of religion, in this time of attention, have appeared to adorn their profession, by their observance of the commands of Christ ; but should it be the case, that in a short time we should have exceptions to make, because some return, like the "dog to his own vomit again ; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire," it ought not to be noticed as any thing against religion ; but an evidence of the depravity and treachery of the human heart. Tares are often found among wheat, and false professors among real Christians. God has seen it needful to leave some of his own children to fall, to try them, thereby to make them more fit for their master's use and service. And if some poor hardened sinners are wishing that those who have deserted their company may turn back ; God may according to his word send them this delusion, and let them try to feed

their souls with the sins of his professing people. While the sinners' hearts are hardening and preparing for destruction ; God calls the backslider, he returns, condemns his shameful apostacy, and by making confession, he brings glory to God and shame upon sinners. Sinners, in a day of divine grace, should fear, lest while they are watching others and neglecting their own souls, the Spirit should be quenched, and that come on them spoken by the prophet to Israel in their rebellion ; "that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken." Though we fear that some who have appeared to run well, for a season, will apostatize, and thereby grieve the generation of God's children ; yet we hope better things of many, who have appeared to embrace the truth, in this joyful season, and things that accompany salvation. We have raised expectations, that God who has exerted the power of sovereign grace, in changing their hearts, will put forth the same exertions, in keeping them, through faith, to eternal life.

There are many, who cavil at the similarity of the accounts given of the work of God, in various places, and the likeness of individual narratives ; and would fain suggest that these things were learned from each other ; but if such persons would call to mind, and carefully attend to the following things, they would be constrained to say, that their likeness was an evidence of the truth of them, viz. The natural hearts of all men are alike, in the same state of total moral depravity.—All men have to do with the same God. All men have a similar monitor or conscience within them ; are under the same law ;

hear the same gospel ; enjoy the same bible, and means of religion. All men are called, or moved by the same spirit ; are in the same world and are bound to the same eternity. From these considerations it is not strange, that persons who never saw or heard of each other, when born again by the spirit of God, should speak the same things ; and when met, should converse as though they had been born of the same parents and educated under the same means. This, instead of being an argument against religion is a clear proof that it is from God.

And now, may the God of hope fill us with all joy, and peace in believing ; and grant that we, who have named the name of Christ, may depart from iniquity. Amen.

From yours, &c.

ISRAEL DAY.

Killingly, August, 1802.

Letter from a Father to his Son.

August 2, 1801.

"DEAR SON,

"YOUR letter, of the 20th ultimo, now lies before me—I have perused it with some conflict of feelings. You well know my sentiments in moral things. "In the name of common sense, with confidence, with boldness and assurance," you ask, "what we were made for, if not to live to ourselves?" I shall not search for arguments, a priori, I shall take for granted what is particularly asserted in the holy scriptures. 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—In another place it is said, "the love of Christ constraineth us, that they who live should not henceforth live to them-

selves, but to him who died for them and rose again." The pious psalmist says, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee"—"God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." The psalmist also addressing his own soul, says, "Return unto thy rest O my soul"—"Cleave unto the Lord your God"—O taste and see that the Lord is good"—"In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more." It is also asserted in Gal. vi. 16. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them." The word of God, my dear son, is the rule to direct us in all our walks in life. And that person who chalks out a rule for himself by fabricating a theoretic scheme, founded on his passions, or on some visionary phantom, existing no where but in his own distorted imagination, must float very loosely, and precariously on the tide of life. "In vain will you search for happiness," as you express it, "by plowing the trackless ocean, or roaming in solitary wilds." No person can be happy in this world when he avoids his duty, and no one is so wretched as he who takes himself out of the divine protection. You further say, in your letter, "Can we enjoy this life without strictly adhering to this principle of self-love? Certainly we cannot." Alas! my son, what an inference! what a conclusion!—I acknowledge a person is to regard himself and to seek his own happiness; but he is to do all this in God's appointed way—God is the chief good in the universe, and the happiness of all created intelligencies consists in the enjoyment of him. The good man,

in scripture, is represented, as "seeking not his own." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "Ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price—therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—Now, my son, put your trust in God, and submit on gospel terms, and your mind will be calm; the rugged road of life will appear to be smooth and delightful in the discharge of duty.

"Those doctrines which you mostly oppose, are, the *decrees*, *election*, and the *divine sovereignty*. But permit me to assure you, that they are connected with the atonement by Christ, and are the most comforting and consoling doctrines in the bible; in short, they are the only hope of the true child of God.

"I now proceed to take notice of another sentence in your letter. "I do not wish by argument to convince you that I am right, but it must be more than human wisdom and foresight to convince me that I am wrong, the reason is, I don't intend to be convinced." O my son, what an astonishing determination is this! Bring arguments as many as you please, but don't make assertions—I am always willing to lay myself open to conviction, by coolly and candidly discussing a subject, and why had you not better suspend your opinion, for a while, in things that you cannot comprehend, than to make a rash conclusion at the age of sixteen. When you speak on political subjects, you totally turn the tables; you say, "But before we form our judgment, we ought to examine it more minutely." Why, my son, ought we not in our moral concerns to examine the subject still more minutely? Do not rash

conclusions in matters of infinite moment denote an obstinate, and perverse temper of mind, or a heart totally opposed to holiness and all moral good? Pause a moment, and ponder, sift your sentiments—retire alone in your closet, submit yourself to God, through the merits of Christ, and ask the divine aid and direction. To be really virtuous is the great lesson before us, and every accomplishment, and every acquirement to the exclusion of moral goodness, are comparatively less than nothing and altogether vanity.

"You also remark, that the passage which I quoted concerning the ancient Hebrews, "does not apply in the present case, because mankind (you say) at the present day are totally different from what they were centuries ago." Why, my son, does it not apply; the human heart has been the same in all ages. Envy and malice were conspicuous in Cain—intrigue and sycophancy in Absalom—blasphemy in Rabshakeh—murder in Hazeel—enormous pride in Haman, and cruelty in Herod. What can be the difference? Surely nothing, only mankind in the present period of declension, are more refined in wickedness. But the divine government is the same, and God will not deviate from his ordinary course, in the dispensations of his providence, and in his dealings towards mankind because of their refinement in sin. I consider you, now, my dear son, in that dangerous period of life, when you are most exposed to the allurements of temptation; I have many an anxious hour, fearing that you will indulge habits of thinking, that will lead you to infidelity. In my remarks to you from time to time, on the subject, you have

thought me too severe and illiberal, and that my bodings were ill founded ; but by your own account, you are exposed to the company of infidel declaimers ; you listen to their wit, their brilliancy, and gay rhetoric, and you silently applaud them for their skill in reasoning, their boldness of thought, and the polish of their manners. No person will all at once discard the early impressions, of a religious education, inculcated by pious parents, and adopt sentiments in their stead, which are addressed only to the passions.

"From early life, some persons grow up into a state of confirmed infidelity, "from a froward, perverse natural temper." But this frowardness of natural temper and disposition, I am far from thinking, applies to you ; I am ready to acknowledge that you have been an obedient and pleasant child from your infancy. You have been thoughtful and serious in childhood, and your mind has been tenderly impressed with religious truths. The awful realities of a future state have stared you in the face, and you have formed resolutions, that you would live a religious life. The divine law has been brought home to your conscience. When the Holy Spirit has visited you, and earnestly offered you the rewards of an heavenly inheritance, how exceedingly important was it for you then to accept of the terms of salvation, thus offered by your Redeemer ! The ordinary way that God deals with sinners, is to send his Holy Spirit ; he urges, he strives and impresses their minds with the great and solemn truths, that relate to their eternal interest and welfare. And upon a sinner's refusing to submit and accept salvation, the divine energies are

withdrawn from him. It is rare for persons who have had a religious education, not to have some sober reflections, and bitter remorse of conscience for their sins, but by frequent relapses, after repeated calls and warnings, their hearts become more and more hardened, their consciences become seared and callous, till finally God gives up such sinners to judicial hardness of heart, or as it is expressed in the language of holy writ, "He swears in his wrath, that they shall never enter into his rest." After the repeated warnings, and visitations of God's Holy Spirit, and after as many rejections by the sinner, with what fitness, with what propriety, may *Wisdom* utter her voice and say—"Because I have called, and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand," yes repeatedly, and in the most pathetic and tender manner have "I stretched out my hand, and ye have not regarded"—Yes, "ye have set at nought my counsel and would none of my reproof, I will now laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." Yea, when the terrors of death shall seize upon you ; when the stings of an abused and affrighted conscience shall pierce your very soul on a death bed, I will be so far from affording you any comfort or consolation that I will laugh and mock.—Alas, how terrible, and awful is the state of the dying sinner, bereft by an avenging and holy God of a single gleam of hope ! In the common course of God's dealings with sinners he omits nothing, on his part, to withdraw them from evil ; he is ready to grant them freely his grace and Holy Spirit, and God does not forsake them till after they have

thus repeatedly despised his counsels and abused his patience.—This sets the faithfulness, the goodness and justice of God in a clear point of light, and shews that men may be happy if they will—and if they refuse, the fault lies at their own door, and they themselves are the procurers of their own ruin and final perdition. Reflect, my son, a moment and consider—Remember that he who takes himself out of the divine protection, is doomed to perplexities, and gloomy, foreboding fears—he often flies from object to object in pursuit of some momentary pleasure that he may lose in them the remembrance of his real condition. Your happiness, your real good lies near the heart of your father, and when he even suspects that any of his children are swerving from principle, and deviating from the pleasant paths of wisdom and duty, it pierces him to the heart.

“Towards the conclusion of your letter, from a consciousness that you had suggested wrong sentiments, you suppose that your letter would be unentertaining to me; “if so,” you say, “destroy it.” No, my son, I don't destroy letters, and I hope you will not be so ungrateful, and unfilial, as to destroy this.—Read it over and over again, and think of it—and I pray God to give you a heart to know the things that belong to your peace before they are forever hidden from your eyes. O my son, let not the fascinating charms of a delusive and tempting world lead you astray from duty, for in refusing to obey the calls of wisdom, and by setting at nought counsel and reproof, the heart strangely becomes at variance both with religion and principle.

“I subscribe with the utmost tenderness, your very affectionate father.”

Extracts from the Son's letter, in reply to the foregoing.

Yale-College, Aug. 2, 1802.

“DEAR FATHER,

“THIS day completes one year since I received your letter dated Aug. 2d, 1801, since which time various events have occurred, which may not be uninteresting or unentertaining to you. When I received your kind and affectionate letter, dated as above, it excited such emotions in my mind, as ought never to be indulged by a son, towards a parent. At that time I thought you to be exceedingly cruel towards me, and that you were unreasonably severe, in urging and pressing me to attend to those things, which then appeared to me calculated only to render my life unhappy, if not completely miserable. Your letter, together with sundry other letters which you wrote before and afterwards, was replete with such ideas and sentiments, that my reason compelled me to yield to their truth, while my heart was totally opposed to every thing you suggested for my consideration. At the same time, I studiously employed myself to find out something either from scripture, or from the sophistry of Voltaire, or other infidel writers, which would in some measure obviate your remarks and quiet me in my own sentiments. In combatting the subject with you, you will recollect that I quoted the following texts of scripture, viz. Eccl. vii. 16. “Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself over-wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?” or as it is expressed in

the Hebrew, Why shouldest thou be desolate? Also chap. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes." You will notice here, that I did not include the latter part of the verse, (viz.) "But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Thus I collected detached texts to answer my purpose. In short, I had recourse to a "Refuge of lies," "and to that falsehood which smiled on my guilt." Not satisfying myself with arguments derived from scripture, I turned my attention to the writings of those men who had boldness enough to assert that the scriptures were false, and an imposition on mankind—that religion was priestcraft, and "death was eternal sleep." Pondering over their sophistical arguments for some weeks, I almost reasoned myself into a belief of them, yet in my retired moments, the truths of divine revelation stared me in the face—and I could not but acknowledge their worth and importance. I had, at times, dreadful apprehensions of the consequences that would result from a disbelief of them. I conceived that the doctrines of the divine decrees, election and sovereignty, were altogether inconsistent with my free agency—and that for God to punish a sinner forever, when he had determined all his actions, was arbitrary, partial and unjust. During these conflicts, and struggles of my mind, and knowing that God must be holy, just and good, and that his word was true—I thought that as I could not serve him here with such a temper and frame of mind as

were required, and that I should never be any better—I was led to believe that to rid myself of the troubles and perplexities of this life, and go into a future state, would be far preferable. I believed also that God had given me up to hardness of heart, and to blindness of mind, and had consigned me to eternal misery. With these dreadful apprehensions, I supposed no good could result from my continuing here in this world, a day or a moment longer."

In this situation, his mind being greatly agitated, and assailed, at times, by the most shocking temptations, he continued during the fall of 1801—after giving the particulars of which, he proceeds.

"In the beginning of the last winter I came to this determination (viz.) to live a life of external morality in order to render my friends happy—Still believing that when death should close my earthly career, hell would be my portion forever. I thus resolved to think no more of a future state, but I was now and then overtaken with this terrible truth, that my works must be brought into judgment. The sudden death of a friend, or an acquaintance, would alarm me. I often called to my remembrance the awakening sermons that I had heard from the desk; nor could I wipe from my mind the awful denunciations of my bible. All these combined would occasion the deepest anguish in my soul. At these times I was extremely unhappy. Life appeared to be a burden, and what heightened my misery, was the peace and happiness that Christians enjoyed. To see those of my classmates, who were religious, walking calmly along thro' this vale of tears, without a murmuring or repining sigh, and submit-

five to the divine law and government, was a source to me of the deepest affliction. Thus was I alternately calm and secure, and afflicted with bitter remorse. Sometimes I was unable to pursue my studies, and at others, I studied merely to expel those thoughts, which lay with so much weight on my mind. I continued in this situation, that I have now related, till the 6th of May last, when upon reviewing my life for months past, and reflecting on the course that I had pursued, and the many resolutions that I had formed of destroying my life, I fell into a state of dejection and despair. I more fully believed, than ever, that the torments of hell, were to be my everlasting portion, and that remaining here on earth enhanced the misery to which I thought myself inevitably doomed. I felt fully confident that God in his wrath had said, *Depart from me thou worker of iniquity.*"

From this, to the 9th of May, which was the sabbath, the anguish of his mind seems to have risen to its height ; during which period, he was powerfully attacked by the adversary, and his mind filled with horrid temptations. The state of his mind, and the relief which he experienced, on the sabbath, he relates as follows :—

" I was very much distressed all the forenoon, was in pain of body, as well as in exquisite horror of mind, and concluded that nothing but death could mitigate my sufferings.—But alas ! who can fathom the love and benevolence of an all-wise creator ? He had reserved me for something which I did not expect. About one o'clock in the afternoon, having my bible in my hands, and turning from one

end to the other, I happened to cast my eyes on this passage in the cxxxviii. Psalm, " In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Upon reading this passage, something which never entered into my heart to conceive now poured in upon my soul like a " mighty rushing wind." Every thing now appeared like a new creation. The day which had appeared before this time, dark, dismal and gloomy, now appeared uncommonly pleasant. Christ my only Saviour, whom I had so long despised and persecuted, now appeared altogether lovely. The bible above all other books appeared the best and the most important. The pain of body under which I labored, but a few hours before, was gone. In short this was one of the most agreeable afternoons that I ever spent in my life. Every thing appeared perfectly right in the divine government ; I felt submissive, and rejoiced that God was on the throne, and I felt fully resigned to his holy law, as being just and good, and I hope I shall never feel otherwise. From that day to the present I have enjoyed myself uncommonly well. My chief delight has been to worship God, who from his boundless goodness, has been pleased to manifest himself, by his grace to me, who am the greatest of sinners.—I consider myself, dear father, as a brand snatched from the burning. I am now resolved to devote the remainder of my life to the service of my Redeemer ; and finally I hope that I may be made a trophy of his grace in his heavenly kingdom.

" Thus I have given you a brief account of the scene through which I have passed, and with all

filial affection I subscribe myself your dutiful son."

Religious Intelligence.

Hampshire Missionary Society.

Extracts from the Report of the Trustees to the Hampshire Missionary Society: at their annual meeting at Northampton, on the last Thursday in August, A. D. 1802.

THE Trustees of the *Hampshire Missionary Society*, in conformity to the sixth article of the Constitution, make to the Society the following Report of their doings, since their appointment in January last;—of the pleasing prospects before the Society;—and of the measures which the Trustees judge to be proper for accomplishing the benevolent and pious designs of the Institution.

The Trustees entered, immediately, upon the important duties assigned to them. Copies of the Constitution of the Society and papers, to obtain subscriptions to its funds, were sent into the several towns, and parishes of the county; and expedients were employed to procure returns of the donations and subscriptions obtained. Instructions for the direction of the Missionaries and an address to the inhabitants of the New-Settlements were formed and printed.

As soon as sufficient information could be obtained of the state of the Society's funds, measures were adopted for procuring suitable Missionaries; and five hundred dollars were appropriated for the payment of Missionaries the present season; and three hundred dollars for the purchase of

Bibles and other pious Christian writings to be distributed in the New Settlements.

Under the appointment of the Trustees, Rev. *Samuel Taggart*, and Rev. *John Taylor* have entered on a mission to the counties of Montgomery, Herkemer and Oneida in the state of New-York, to be employed on the north side of Mohawk river. Mr. *Taggart* began his tour about the last of June, to continue in the service of the Society sixteen weeks, with liberty to visit for three weeks the counties of Chenango and Onondago, to preach to the people and gain information of their religious state. Mr. *Taylor* followed him about the middle of July, and is to join and co-operate with him for the term of twelve weeks.

Under like appointment Rev. *Jonathan Grout*, early in July, began a mission to the new settlements in the District of Maine. His engagement is for sixteen weeks. In the second week of August, Rev. *Enoch Hale* followed Mr. *Grout* with directions to join and co-operate with him for twelve weeks.

These Missionaries have so lately commenced their labors, that the Trustees have not been able to obtain any very interesting intelligence from them to communicate to the Society, excepting that the three first named have arrived, in good health, at the places of their destination, and have entered upon their work with a becoming activity and zeal and with flattering prospects of accomplishing the object of their mission with happy success. The acquaintance which the members of the Society have with the characters of their Missionaries will, it is presumed, excite, in addition to their fervent prayers, and

thanksgivings to God in their behalf, the pleasing expectation of their fidelity and good success.

The appropriations made for the purchase of Books have been carried into effect as far as circumstances would admit of its being done advantageously for the Society. One gross of Bibles, five dozen of Janeway's Token for Children, and thirty copies of the select Sermons lately published in this county have been purchased. An impression has been made of 1000 copies of Doddridge's Address to a Master of a Family, and of the same number of the Assembly's shorter catechism. Nineteen copies of Dr. Lathrop's Sermon, entitled God's challenge to Infidels, have been contributed. Five hundred copies of the Trustees Instructions to the Missionaries and their Address to the inhabitants of the new settlements have been printed: And Proposals are issued for reprinting Dr. Lathrop's four Sermons on the mode and subjects of Christian Baptism, and his two Sermons entitled Christ's warning to his churches to beware of false prophets. Measures are also pursuing to procure Doddridge's Rise and Progress of religion in the soul, and Fuller's Gospel its own witness, that they may be ready for distribution another season.

The Trustees have sent on for distribution by the hands of their Missionaries, six dozen of Bibles, five hundred of Doddridge's Address to the Master of a Family, one thousand of the shorter Catechisms, five dozen of Janeway's Token for Children, fifteen of the Select Sermons, nineteen of Lathrop's God's Challenge to Infidels, and eighty of the Trustees Instructions and Address.

There have been collected for

the use of the Society 1163 Dollars 77 Cents, of which sum 27 Dollars 58 Cents are now in the hands of the Committee of the Trustees, ready to be delivered to the Treasury, and the remainder has been paid into the Treasury and the Treasurer's receipts for the same are in the hands of the Committee; 372 Dollars 14 Cents are now due to the Society and remain to be collected; 432 Dollars 42 Cents are payable annually in the month of January for the six following years; 4130 Dollars 43 Cents are the total amount of the subscriptions and contributions which have been made by pious and liberal benefactors to the Society.

The infancy of the Institution has not furnished time for the Society to realize the joyous fruits of their liberality in its happy effects among their brethren of the New Settlements. But the rich blessings, which have been experienced, in various and distant regions by similar institutions of an earlier date, may well excite in this Society pleasing and joyful hopes "that the merciful Jesus, who hath shed his blood for sinners, will acknowledge and bless them also, in their sincere and ardent zeal to promote his kingdom in the salvation of immortal souls."

Berkshire Missionary Society.

ON the 21st of Sept. the Missionary Society in the counties of Berkshire and Columbia held their annual meeting at Pittsfield. The following officers were chosen for the year ensuing, viz. Rev. Ephraim Judson, President, the Hon. Timothy Edwards, Esq. Vice-President, the Hon. William Walker, Esq. Treasurer, Rev.

Alvan Hyde, Secretary, and Rev. *Oliver Ayer*, Clerk.—The Rev. *Dr. Stephen West*, the Hon. *Timothy Edwards*, Esq. the Rev. *Ephraim Judson*, the Hon. *William Walker*, Esq. the Rev. *Thomas Allen*, *Elijah Williams*, Esq. the Rev. *Daniel Collins*, Deacon *John Hall*, the Rev. *David Perry*, Deacon *Stephen Nesb* and the Rev. *Alvan Hyde*, Trustees.

From the report of the late board of Trustees to the Society, it appeared that they had employed the following Missionaries the last year, viz. the Rev. *Samuel Leonard* two months in the northern counties of Vermont, and two months in the western counties of New-York—the Rev. *David Perry* three months in the western counties of New-York—the Rev. *David Porter* three months, and the Rev. *David Harrower*, nine weeks in the county of Luzerne in the state of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. *Benjamin Wooster* three months in the north-western counties of New-York, bordering on Lake Champlain.

From the journal of the Rev. Mr. *Harrower*, it appeared that in performing his mission, he rode 459 miles, preached 40 sermons, attended 10 conferences, and 2 church meetings, and visited more than 50 families. Rev. Mr. *Porter* rode 711 miles, preached 60 sermons, attended 14 conferences, and 4 church meetings, assisted in forming two churches, baptized 15 children, and made 141 family visits.—Rev. Mr. *Perry*, in accomplishing his mission, rode 1037 miles, preached 117 times, attended 8 church meetings and religious conferences, administered the Lord's supper 3 times, baptized 4 children, visited 6 schools, and 96 families.—Rev. Mr. *Leonard*, when on his mission in the

western counties of New-York, preached 43 sermons, attended 15 conferences, baptized 26 children and 3 adults, administered the Lord's supper twice, and admitted 11 persons to the communion of churches. The journals of the missions of Rev. Mess^{rs}. *Leonard* and *Wooster*, in the northern counties of Vermont have not yet been received.

The Missionaries uniformly testify, that the people in the new settlements are much disposed to attend religious meetings, and that Missionaries were never more needed, more cordially received, and better treated than at present.

POETRY.

COMMUNICATED AS ORIGINAL.

The spirit of prayer, and acceptance with God desired.

1. **O** GOD supreme, whose piercing sight,
Darts thro' the darkest shades of night,
Look down, with a propitious eye,
While prostrate, at thy feet I lie.
2. Th' appointed hour of prayer is come,
But still my wand'ring thoughts would roam;
Sin has estrang'd my heart from thee,
And guilt would from thy presence flee.
3. O'erwhelm'd, my bosom swells with grief;
My native vileness! unbelief!
If only mov'd with slavish fear,
Will God vouchsafe a gracious ear?
4. What flatt'ries vain have I believ'd!
Oh, how thy Holy Spirit griev'd!
In this my wretched, helpless state,
Is he quite gone? Is all too late?
5. I am a sinner, poor and blind:
'Tis not in earth to ease my mind;
I walk in darksome shades of night,
Nor can creation cheer my fight.
6. Father, I would not yet despair,
But still presume a humble prayer;

"Gracious and Merciful" thy name,
And thou unchangeably the same.

7. Oh, draw me to thy gracious throne,
Through th' atonement of thy Son.
Lord, every grace is thine to give,
Look down and let the rebel live.

8. Dear Saviour, pity from above ;
Oh, let me freely share thy love ;
Be thou my advocate ; to thee,
To thee, alone, for help I flee.

9. O may the Spirit deign to shine,
Through this benighted soul of mine :
With light, and all thy quick'ning rays,
Inspire my heart to pray'r and praise.

10. Trembling, before the awful throne
Of sov'reign grace, I'll cast me down ;
Here, all my hope, and all my fear ;
And if I perish, perish here.

LURANDA.

On Death—To a Friend.

1. 'TIS night; and busy mortals are
retir'd to rest,
And all the world in solemn darkness
lies,
But pensive thoughts oppress my lab'ring
heart,
And balmy sleep's a stranger to my eyes.

2. Oh Death ! destroyer of the human
race.
When will thy tyranny o'er mortals end !
Often, unthinking, in the midst of days,
Thy helpless victims to the grave de-
scend.

3. None are exempt from thy prevail-
ing hand,
All ranks are levell'd by thy equal stroke ;
Nor youth, nor age, thy dreadful pow-
er withstand,
But feel alike thy agonizing shock.

4. Once I was blest with two dear
virtuous friends,
Their worth I knew, perhaps too fond-
ly lov'd,
By Heav'n resum'd, their souls to bliss
ascend,
I sigh'd, lamented, tho' my heart ap-
prov'd.

4. Why flow my tears, why should I
not rejoice,
At their deliv'rance from this cumbrous
clay ?

I soon shall meet them, hear their gen-
tle voice,

Welcome my soul to everlasting day.
AMANDA.

The Retrospect—addressed to a Friend.

1. THE tear of sorrow oft bedews
my cheek,
And rising sighs my secret griefs disclose ;
May I, my friend, your kind attention
claim,
To the short, sad recital of my woes.

2. Once sickle fortune, on Amanda smil'd
Her lavish'd gifts adorn'd my early
youth,
Blest me with parents amiable and kind,
One gentle friend, my every care to
soothe.

3. By education's fostering care refin'd,
My bosom glow'd with friendship's ar-
dent fire,
While youthful fancy pourtray'd scenes
of bliss,
And fondly hop'd to realize desire.

4. But Ah ! the sad reverse ! relentless
death
Snatch'd from my bosom my beloved
friend,
Distress and sorrow rent my bleeding
heart,
While sadly mourning her untimely end.

5. Unpitying fortune not content with
this,
Sent dire adversity to wound our peace,
Our friends forsook us with contempt
and scorn
Insulting—added to our deep distress.

6. Where is the generous friend, whose
gentle hand,
Will kindly soothe the poignancy of
wee ;
Restore a wretched mourner's long lost
peace,
And bid her heart with tranquil pleasure
glow ?

7. To thee, O God ! I lift my tearful
eyes,
Thy power alone can ease my aching
heart,
Be thou my Friend, my Father and my
God,
And heavenly comforts to my soul im-
part.

AMANDA.

Donation to the Connecticut Missionary Society.

A friend of Missions, 100 Dollars.